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Notes and News.

Women M.P.'S.

On the motion that it is desirable to introduce a Bill to make women eligible to Parliament an animated and novel debate took place in the House of Commons on Wednesday, October 23rd; the debate being still in progress as we go to press, the fate of the motion is unknown to us. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Herbert Samuel and backed by Sir Willoughby Dickinson, the lifelong friend of the Suffrage cause, and Mr. Adamson, Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party. The arguments for the admission of women to this form of public service were well and forcibly put, and the opposition had little to bring forward beyond hoary custom, dislike of change, and eloquent pleas for delay. The argument that the question lay outside the scope of the Speaker's Conference carried a little weight, but the plea that women themselves should say by voting whether they wanted women M.P.'s came oddly from the mouths of old opponents of the suffrage, and was easily answered by the fact that often eligibility implies election, if the voters do in fact wish for a woman representation. The temptation to make jokes on the subject, which was doubtless present in many "honourable gentlemen's" old fashioned minds, was on the whole well resisted, and we are glad to think that the days of that form of humour are almost past. The following motion was also discussed, but on going to press the result had not reached us:—"That this House is in favour of all available Galleries being opened to men and women equally and impartially."

The Extension of the Suffrage.

Among the many questions which will demand the attentions of women Members of Parliament will be the extension of the suffrage to women under thirty. It must not be thought that those women who do possess votes are selfishly contented, and forget the just claims of their still unenfranchised sisters. This matter is all the more urgent now that, so many of England's young men having been killed, the balance of votes will be, for a few years after the war, to an extent not healthy for the nation, on the side of the middle-aged.

The Women of the Services.

Speaking at a Mansion House meeting in support of the Women's Active Service Club on October 18th, Lord Milner said that all the fears expressed when the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps—now known by a longer name—was formed had been most signally falsified by the result. The women who offered their services were just the right sort, as they have proved by their courage in dangerous situations, by their cheerful endurance in very real hardships, and by their soldierly discipline and the *esprit-de-corps* which they have so readily assimilated. As for the fear that they would not offer themselves in sufficient numbers, it was now seen that the numbers were surprisingly good. But many more are wanted. Their help is called for in any number of quarters. The American Army, for instance, is now calling for between four thousand and five thousand of our active service women, and our own Expeditionary Force is short of several thousand. The women of the Active Service Corps are in a position to render invaluable service to their country as the great final crisis approaches.

Women Police.

The Women Police Service is asking for recruits; this is a fine opportunity for educated women who are interested in social problems and desirous of gaining practical experience. Policewomen are required for service in Provincial Boroughs, and factories, both His Majesty's and private. The four weeks' training, for which the nominal charge of 5s. is made, includes attendances at police courts, patrol work, and lectures. The salary for factory work begins at £2 7s. 6d., rising on promotion to sergeant to £2 12s. 6d. The cost of uniform is about £12. Applicants should be of sound health and aged between twenty-five and forty-five.

Women Accountants.

At a meeting of the Society of Incorporated Accountants and Auditors on October 17th, it was resolved to admit women to the membership of the Society on the same terms and conditions as men are now admitted. There was a large majority in favour of this step, and it is one to be much applauded.

Separation Allowances.

One of the recommendations of the Cabinet Committee on separation allowances which the War Cabinet has approved, is that when a childless wife is for any reason unable to work, an addition of 6s. 6d. shall be made by the local War Pensions Committees to the flat rate. In addition to this, the local War Pensions Committees are authorised to pay a childless wife an allowance up to 12s. if she can show that her present income is less than her income before her husband's enlistment. The Ministry of Pensions is, we are glad to hear, issuing a special notice calling the attention of women to the supplemental allowances which are due to them in certain circumstances.

40D. D.O.R.A.

We publish on another page a message from Mrs. Fawcett concerning the protest meeting to be held by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene on November 6th. The Association is, on this occasion, working in conjunction with the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, as well as with all the other principal social and religious organisations. Members of the N.U.W.S.S. will be interested to hear that Mrs. Fawcett will preside.

Mrs. Fawcett and Birmingham University.

Lord Robert Cecil, the new Chancellor of Birmingham University, has asked Mrs. Fawcett to accept an Honorary Degree at the time of his installation. This is news which will give great pleasure to many people, both within and without the N.U.W.S.S. Mrs. Fawcett and Lord Robert have long been associated in their devotion to Woman Suffrage and to other good causes. Birmingham University does itself honour by associating them once more.

LIBERATING THE WIVES.

SUFFRAGISTS within the next few weeks or months will probably discover that they accomplished even more than they foresaw when they won political citizenship for women. Whenever the General Election comes, we shall discover that a subtle but great change has already taken place in the position of married women. Thousands of married women will suddenly recognise that they have become persons—wholly, and not fractionally, as before. It will matter what they think, and it will matter enormously that they actually *should* think. We shall see exactly what it was the Anti-Suffragists meant when they used to talk about the "dissension in the home" which the enfranchisement of married women would produce. We shall discover that what really alarmed them was the idea of a wife becoming answerable to her own conscience for her actions as a citizen of the British Empire. Possibly they knew by instinct how vast is the difference between assenting to the expression of opinions about affairs in which one is powerless to take part, and the testing of ideas with a view to direct individual action. By these remarks we do not wish to imply that to most married couples the General Election will bring a revelation of acute differences of view, or that husbands and wives will never put their crosses to the names of the same candidates. What we do mean is that in the relations of every pair of married voters a change will take place. The change may be in each case quite small—only visible to the observant—but the aggregate of these changes will be important. It means the greatest step in the liberation of wives which has been taken since the passing of the Married Women's Property Act, and far transcending that measure in its scope and distant consequences.

Family conversation will assume quite a different tone. In the old days the husband talked about politics, the wife listened, coming to table (as speakers so often mendaciously say they have come to a meeting) "in the attitude of a learner." The husband made his statement, uttering his views with more or less dogmatism, according to his less or greater humility, and the wife was, as reporters say, "understood to express her assent," usually by offering the elector another cup of tea. All this will now be changed. On the eve of an election a wife will hesitate to express mere civil agreement with her husband's political notions if she secretly intends to vote in a different sense. The husband on his side will be more anxious to learn what his wife does actually think about the great issues of the world's debate, and he will try rather to draw forth her ideas and to convince her of the justice of his own than simply to harangue a tame audience. We must anticipate that some women will prefer "a quiet life" to a quiet conscience, and will vote with their husbands and against their own convictions. These will be a minority. In the great majority of cases there will be general agreement, though the shades of thought may not match identically. But all through the nation there will be a tremendous political awakening on the part of married women who at the same time will become aware that their position, even in the happiest of homes, has changed for the better.

We are all tempted at times to say that legislation and public action are powerless to remove some of the worst evils which darken the lives of humanity. This temptation ought generally to be resisted. For if we think far enough into the particular matter (whatever it may happen to be), we shall generally find that had public action or the laws of the country been different, we might not have been distressed by some special exhibition of cruelty or injustice. The domineering spirit of some men, the cowardly selfishness of some women, the contemptuous spirit in which some highly educated people speak of the abilities of those who are less educated, the glorification by parents of sons at the expense of daughters—all these and many other odious features of private life are traceable to the law. Distribute political power, education, and the nation's wealth more evenly, lessen the difference between the thrones of the mighty and the low stools of the poor, and at once we shall find an improvement in the conduct of individuals among themselves.

Believing, then, as we do in the enormous power for good of public action, we ask what further can be accomplished towards the liberation of wives?

We see that the economic position of married women is unsatisfactory. It is a position to-day which is affected by different and almost opposing conditions. An old view, still held by certain classes, is that marriage offers a dumping-ground for daughters and a fairly easy means of securing an income for life. Another view is that, by marrying, a woman agrees to second her husband in his profession or trade without having any definite recognition from his employers or any terms of commercial partnership. This view affects, for instance, the position of school house-masters and their wives, the clergy and their wives, and many humbler couples, such as porters, caretakers, &c. A third view is that the married woman is a more or less handicapped wage-earner; and a fourth is that she is both a wage-earner outside and a sort of general servant "on mutual terms" at home. It is owing to these exceedingly different conditions and views—ranging from the old "establishment" and wearing-of-family-diamonds notion, up to distinguished professional life for married women, and down to the lowest domestic dependence—that we find there are such complicated evils to study and to rectify.

Two facts are clearly seen. The first of these is that married women, having once felt the liberation which earning and owning their own money gives, are never likely to abandon their wage-earning power. The second fact is that those married women who are prevented from earning money by the circumstances of their marriage are dissatisfied when they compare their own position with that of self-supporting wives. Whether their dissatisfaction is right or wrong matters not for the moment. We have simply to take account of the grievance, because it will lead to certain results. Some women will ignore their hindrances to wage-earning, and will make money by stinting their domestic labours. Others will find themselves prevented by their own poverty from looking after the health of their children as well as they would wish to do. In any case, we find that a line of division is being set up between wage-earning wives and those who are dependent upon their husbands for everything, and that among the latter dissatisfaction is spreading.

To the dowry system we are not likely to revert, though much needs to be changed in regard to our testamentary and inheritance laws which now give wide scope to sex-favouritism and caprices of every kind. That the wife should have a definite claim to some part of her husband's income is a much more feasible proposal. But there are also many cases—and in the future they may increase—where the husband's earnings, though adequate as payment for his own labour, are not enough to maintain a group of people round about him. Some persons who have thought about this part of the subject, demand, as we know, that the State should pay the mothers for their work at home. Whether we support any of the recent schemes for mothers' pensions or not, it is clear that we are more and more tending to liberate the married woman by easing her burdens. The provision of national kitchens, of meals for school children, of nursery schools, of public baths and wash-houses—all tend towards the same result.

Nor must it be forgotten that this liberation of married women will gradually result (mothers' pensions notwithstanding) in a steady movement of wives towards wage-earning life. For this we must be prepared. The married workers of the future will, however, be much more independent than those of the past. Their homes will be more comfortable, their children better cared for, and they will not be driven by poverty and want of education to take the least skilled and worst-paid work they can get. And always the fact that they are electors will make an enormous difference to their place in home and State.

A Message from Mrs. Fawcett.

I earnestly hope all members of the N.U.W.S.S. who can possibly do so will make a point of attending the meeting of protest against 40D. D.O.R.A. called by the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene, to be held in the Queen's Hall on Wednesday evening, November 6th, at 7.30. This regulation has all the vital defects and injustices of the Contagious Diseases Acts, and I hope women will show that they are not going to allow the great work of Josephine Butler's life to be undone.

Millicent Garrett Fawcett.

THE WORK OF SOCIETIES UNDER THE NATIONAL UNION.

Note.—The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies is going through a critical and interesting time at the present moment, harvesting the fruits of their past efforts and preparing for more efforts in the future. We are delighted to publish an article by Miss. E. F. Rathbone, which we think will be an encouragement to the local work of the N.U.W.S.S.

Secretaries are sometimes heard to grumble that there is nothing for societies in small towns to do under the equality programme, yet when asked to do a definite simple piece of work, such as getting a resolution passed about a reform on the programme, they complain that they have not time to call a meeting for the purpose or that the members would be too busy to attend it.

I believe that the latter excuse for inaction is the more genuine, but to meet the former it may be well to put forward some suggestions for practical work that is essential if the reforms which we have pledged ourselves to promote are to have the necessary driving power behind them to carry them into law.

1. *The Eligibility of Women for Parliament.*—This is the most immediately urgent of the claims on our activities, because there is every reason to hope that if public opinion is brought sufficiently to bear on Parliament, it would be possible to carry through a Bill during the next few weeks, in time, that is, for women to present themselves as candidates at the next general election. Societies should not lose a moment if they have not already taken action under this heading. Every organisation of men or women in their area should be approached, personally if possible, and asked to bring the question before the next meeting of their members or committee and to get a resolution passed and sent up to the Home Secretary and to the local Members of Parliament. It is as well to supply the less experienced organisations with a form of resolution, which they can vary at will, and also with a list of the names and addresses of the persons to whom it should be sent. Paragraphs should be got into the local press, if possible, calling attention to the urgency of this question if the newly enfranchised women citizens are to be enabled to take their proper share in the work of reconstruction, by expressing their views through representatives of their own sex on those questions which specially concern the interests of women and of the home.

2. *Parliamentary Candidates and the Equality Programme.*—In view of the persistent rumours that there is to be a General Election at the end of November, societies should at once take steps to ascertain whether the sitting members for their constituencies intend to stand again and whether any other candidates have been chosen by any Party. These members and candidates should then be approached either by letter or deputation, preferably the latter, for the purpose of bringing before them the items on the Union's programme and asking for their support. In many cases it may be possible to organise a joint deputation or letter from women's organisations. Where the member does not reside in the constituency, and is not expected to visit it at a convenient time, it may be best to offer him a deputation in the House of Commons. In this case, headquarters should be asked to appoint a member of the Executive Committee to accompany the deputation. The large, formal deputations of pre-war days may prove impossible to organise in these times, but at least it should surely be possible to arrange an interview between two or three members of the committee and the candidate. It would probably be found that the attitude of candidates towards women's organisations which approach them has suffered "a rare change into something new and strange" since the passing of the Representation of the People Act. It is now their interest as well as their duty to know what the organised and organising women of their constituency are thinking about. If societies feel themselves insufficiently informed on the questions on the programme to face candidates unaided they should apply for assistance and literature to the Information Bureau.

3. *Propaganda Work.*—Now, as in times past, the most important of all the functions of N.U.W.S.S. societies is the educating of public opinion. If this was necessary with regard to a single simple issue such as the Parliamentary Franchise, it is ten times as necessary upon the numerous and difficult questions comprised in the Equality Programme. Societies should set themselves to educate first their own members, secondly other women's organisations, and thirdly the general public, on the questions comprised in the programme. A good way of doing this is to organise a monthly Conference, to which not only members of the society but also members of other women's societies should be invited, at each of which one of these reforms is first explained in an introductory speech and afterwards debated. The following is a specimen list of subjects:—

(*a*) *Position of Women at the next General Election.*—Should there be women candidates for Parliament? If so, should they run as party candidates or as representatives of women's interests?

(*b*) *The position of Widows under the Poor Law.*—Should the civilian widow remain under the Poor Law, or should she, like the war widow, receive a State allowance for herself and her children, adequate in the amount and free from the stigma of pauperism?

(*c*) *Endowment of Motherhood*, with special reference to the existing system of separation allowances. Should these be continued after the war, or should women be dependent, as before, on what their husbands choose to give them out of their wages?

(*d*) *Equal Wages for Equal Value.*—Is this possible before we have endowment of motherhood? What effect may it be expected to have on the admission of women to skilled trades; unemployment among women; national productivity; the position of men with families.

(*e*) *The necessity for an equal Moral Standard*, with special reference to (*a*) D.O.R.A., 40 D; (*b*) the laws relating to solicitation and prostitution.

(*f*) *Women and the Administration of Justice.*—The need for (*a*) women police; (*b*) women solicitors; (*c*) women on juries; (*d*) women magistrates.

(*g*) *Women on Local Authorities.*—How can we get more women on to the Town Council; the local Food Control Committee; the committees in charge of Coal Control and Municipal Kitchens; the Board of Guardians?

Societies may object that all these are difficult subjects; that they have not in their ranks speakers capable of starting discussions on them, or money enough to spend in bringing speakers from a distance. Scarcity of speakers is a very real difficulty, which it is useless to ignore. But surely for some at least of the subjects suggested, it is possible to find a local speaker, man or woman. It should be remembered that the object of these conferences is to elicit the opinions of women themselves; or rather to teach them to form their opinions. They will do this much better if the meetings take the form of a discussion class rather than a series of set speeches. The chairman or leader must be a woman with some of the instincts of a teacher; she need not necessarily be an expert, but she must have got up her subject with sufficient care beforehand to be able to lay the main arguments for either side in simple form before her audience, and to guide the subsequent discussion. Among local headmistresses, lecturers for the W.E.A. or for Adult Schools, surely such women (or men) can be found. Societies should above all get into the habit of making the fullest possible use of the Information Bureau and lending library at headquarters to supply them with suitable literature, reports, and suggestions on all these questions.

Where a Society is afraid to attempt anything so ambitious as a monthly conference, it might at least organise a study circle, which should take up the questions enumerated above, or a selection from them in turn. The members of this circle would in time fit themselves to lead the discussion at a larger meeting.

4. *Practical Work.*—It should be remembered that the object of the National Union is not merely to obtain reforms in the law relating to women, but to enable women to make fuller use of the law as it is. The following are some of the numerous ways of doing this:—

1. Organize a deputation from all the women's Societies of the town. Get all the women's societies in the town to unite in a circular letter to the leader of each political party represented on the town council asking him to receive a deputation from these societies to urge the necessity of more women on the town council.

2. Investigate the condition of widows in receipt of out-relief. If you find that the scale of out-relief allowed by your Board of Guardians is inadequate, organize a deputation to the Board of Guardians to demand that it should be raised.

3. Organize a rota of educated women to attend at the Police court and watch the administration of justice as it affects women.

4. If you have a solicitor in your town who is sound on women's questions and really cares for them, see if you can get him to sit at regular intervals, say one evening a week, or even a month, to give free legal advice to women unable to pay for it on questions affecting their legal rights, such as the rights of guardianship over their children; how to obtain a divorce as a poor person; what steps to take in case of desertion, ill-treatment, or failure to maintain by the husband; how to obtain an affiliation order, and to enforce it, &c. The work of such a "Poor Woman's Lawyer" should always be supplemented by that of a group of practical social workers who will interview the women before they see the lawyer, ascertain that their case is one with which he can suitably deal with, and afterwards assist them in carrying out the instructions given. It is specially necessary to "follow up" the case of women who obtain maintenance or affiliation orders, to see that these are really enforced.

5. Run an "Information Bureau." See the leaflet issued by the N.U.W.S.S. on how to do this. I believe myself that the main function of a local society in this respect is to collect and forward to London queries which can be answered by the N.U.W.S.S. bureau, rather than to attempt to collect and supply information locally, except of course, on purely local matters.

5. *The raising of funds.*—Next to the work of pressing for the eligibility of women to Parliament, the most urgent of all the tasks before the societies to-day is that of raising funds for headquarters. During the war the great reserve fund which had been built up in times of peace has been spent, rightly and necessarily, in carrying the struggle for the vote to a victorious conclusion. It was impossible in war time to repeat the great money-raising efforts on which we formerly depended. Now the exchequer must be refilled if our fine headquarters organisation—the most efficient, I believe, for political purposes that the women's movement has yet produced, is to be kept going until the whole of the objects comprised in that movement has been attained.

Raising the money is always an irksome task, and it is especially so in war time, when there are so many competing objects directly connected with the war. But there are surely all over the country a few thousands of women who care enough for the women's movement and all that it means to the future of women and of the country to contribute something regularly to its funds, if only they realise the necessity. Individual appeals to those able to give large amounts should be made, and these should be supplemented by collective efforts at raising money by some special effort, such as a meeting, lecture, jumble sale, or "sale of vanities." The last named form of effort is based on just the opposite principle to the White Elephant sale, since it asks the donors to contribute something that they value, not merely what they have no use for, and is therefore more in accordance with the Suffragist spirit of sacrifice. The right time for any of these activities is during the weeks before Christmas, so that they may meet the needs of the numerous people whose war-time consciences forbid ordinary shopping, but who like to keep up the custom of Christmas presents.

The National Union has passed through many difficult times, but it has survived them all, thanks to the personality of its President, the loyalty of its societies, and the greatness of its cause. Its cause is not yet won; only the first instalment of it. The future of the Union seems to many of us uncertain; its relation to other organisations presents many difficult problems. But one thing surely is certain—that the time has not yet come to lay down our arms. We are drawing near to a period of extraordinary interest, but also of extraordinary difficulty. The much-talked-of period of reconstruction is "within sight, though not yet within reach." Among the problems it will bring none is more difficult than that of the relation of the sexes in politics, in society, above all in industry. Many bodies, including the newly-formed, energetic, but as yet wholly inexperienced Women Citizens' Associations, are studying bits of that problem and pressing for individual reforms. None but the N.U.W.S.S. as yet stands for the whole feminist demand for a real equality of status, liberties, and opportunities between men and women. The time may come—perhaps is coming quickly—when other bodies may be educated up to that creed, may accept it naturally as a part of what every woman believes. But that time is not yet.

Eleanor F. Rathbone.

Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps in Relation to Women's Work.

"The wonderful work women have done in the War" is a commonplace of to-day and one which appears with automatic regularity in any speech or article on the national war effort. It is usually followed by kindly and encouraging words of praise in which no effort is made to discriminate between the girl who drives a car or milks a cow and the woman who organises and directs a movement comprising tens of thousands of workers—the main fact to the general public being not the value of the work accomplished but *the fact that it is done by a woman.* In short, the incursion of woman into the sphere of work which was regarded as the peculiar province of the male is regarded with an admiring but tolerantly amused surprise by the general public, and it must be confessed that women themselves often encourage such an attitude by their entire satisfaction with their own prodigious efforts on their country's behalf as expressed in washing up dishes at the local hospital or canteen. It seems that most of us have yet to learn that recognition of good work is expressed not by flattery or praise such as might be given to a child who must be encouraged to proceed in the paths of virtue but by the granting of further opportunities and the demand for more and still more work from those who have proved themselves efficient.

These remarks may appear irrelevant to an article on the relation of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps to women's work but as a mater of fact the creation of that Corps, in many ways, was the climax of women's war work. The Army, that most male and conservative of institutions, invited the co-operation of the other sex, and in March, 1917, the Women's (now Queen Mary's) Army Auxiliary Corps was created with the definite idea of substituting women for men in the non-combatant services of the Army at the bases and in the lines of communication in France. Six months later the movement was extended to the United Kingdom.

The majority of the work undertaken is domestic and clerical. At the beginning of the war the supply of army workers was, inevitably, short of the demand. A friend of mine, an Oxford undergraduate, who joined up in 1914 and was drafted as a cook, was sent into the kitchen after a very brief training, and there he and his fellow cooks bravely endeavoured to cope with their new duties, and such little accidents as sanding the floor with oatmeal instead of sawdust, forgetting all the plums in a boiled pudding, so that they had to be stuck in afterwards, and poisoning the whole battalion by stewing fruit in zinc pans, were regarded as regrettable but unavoidable incidents. The division of work comprised coaling and cooking every half-hour alternately—and one shrinks from detailed information as to how often the cooks cleansed themselves from the results of their labours. The Women's Legion, started in 1915, supplied to a great extent the need of trained cooks in camps, and when the man-power problem became urgent and substitution was started the Women's Legion was gradually incorporated into the Q.M.A.A.C. of which it was the germ. Since then the work has increased until it includes over 40,000 women, while the sister services the W.R.N.S. and the W.R.A.F. bring the total number of "serving" women considerably higher.

The organisation of the Corps consists of a Headquarters Staff, working with a War Office Department, an administrative and inspection staff at the Headquarters of each Command, the Receiving Depots and detachments of women attached to Units of the Army. Recruits are first posted to the Receiving Depots where they are uniformed, given preliminary drill and instruction and posted to Camps or Units, where they live in quarters administered by their own officials. These latter comprise Unit (or head) Administrator, Deputy Administrator (second in command), Quarter-mistress and Assistant Administrators, who consist of the Company Commanders, the technical officials in charge of catering, Drafting Officers, and various others. Such, briefly, is the organisation of the Corps.

With regard to the position of women in the labour market after the War, it is an important fact that the Q.M.A.A.C. teaches a trade to women who are untrained, that is to say, free training with full pay is given to those women without previous experience who wish to be cooks, waitresses, clerks, vulcanisers, turners, fitters, electricians, and also to those who wish to work in many other technical categories. Two courses of training have been held for shorthand-typists. The Q.M.A.A.C. is, in short, a skilled Corps and it has absorbed large numbers of unskilled or semi-skilled women, and is turning them into members of society trained to follow a particular trade or profession.

The effect on the work and status of women of such an organisation as that described above must certainly be considerable. Taking the Q.M.A.A.C. alone, 40,000 women have left their homes and are living (generally for the first time in their lives) with many other women. Most of them are the younger and healthier women of the nation, and they are learning a lesson which they have never had the opportunity of learning before—the value of co-operation. They find, as I found the other day, seventy women cooking for and waiting on 4,600 men; they learn the value of economy on a large scale (for every little spot of grease is chased into its own appointed place) and they are earning the respect and admiration of the vast number of men who comprise the modern British Army. In addition to this they are experiencing the joys of a communal existence, and their dances, picnics, concerts, auctions and fancy dress parties enlarge their experience of the fun to be found in social life; last, but not least by a long way, they can know their fellow men on an open, companionable and sensible basis—they work for the men and the men in return express their gratitude in a hundred little ways, such as nailing up shelves, constructing little trolleys for the waitresses' crockery, making foot-rests when there is a draught round the clerks' feet. They go to the regimental concerts, and in return invite the soldiers to their dances, in their recreation rooms; they find out, in fact, that a man can be a very good companion and fellow-worker, besides an 'Arry with whom it is amusing to change one's hat.

In short, the Q.M.A.A.C. should, when at last this war is over, turn out some tens of thousands of healthy young women who have acquired a trade, who have experienced the joys of companionship, and who have learnt the value of "pulling together" with their fellow-workers both male and female.

Where the Money is to Come From.

A few weeks ago a correspondent of The Common Cause remarked, referring to the various schemes for housing reform discussed in these pages, that it would be interesting to know how they were to be paid for. In truth, this is a point upon which we should be very clear and decided in our own minds; for it seems fairly certain that the first use women will make of their political power will be to demand a great many reforms which are likely to cost a great deal of money—although it is equally certain that every penny spent in this way will be repaid a thousandfold, before ten years have passed, in increased national happiness and efficiency.

The war has fortunately served to clear up an enormous amount of muddle-headed thinking over elementary questions of economics. All we need do is to remind ourselves that even in peace time "there is a war on"—the world-wide war against disease and destitution and injustice and greediness; and until these foes are adequately dealt with we must simply adopt as part of our permanent national policy those excellent principles which we find to be necessary when we are up against far less deadly though more tangible enemies in field-grey uniforms. We must not tolerate slackers, we must not tolerate waste, we must not tolerate frivolous personal expenditure of the money England needs so urgently for more important things.

All this, indeed, appears the most obvious common sense; but then we are in a sober and chastened mood to-day—we have been learning some wholesome lessons about the relative importance of our own comfort and our country's welfare, and we are full of good resolutions which may prove rather hard to keep when there is nothing but our sense of honour to prevent us from straying back into the primrose path again. Therefore we must make up our minds at once that if we are to justify ourselves as decent citizens, if we are to "do our bit" in building up a country which shall be a little worthier of the young lives laid down for it, we must be prepared to sacrifice certain luxuries, and the superfluous wealth which buys those luxuries; and to sacrifice them *for good*. There is no other way. Statesmen and financial experts may juggle as they will with alternative schemes for taxing imports, taxing capital, taxing income, taxing land or taxing food; in the end the only possible means of providing money for things we *do* want is to refrain from spending it upon things we don't want and could quite easily do without.

And we must not allow anybody to cheat themselves into a belief that when the war is over we can slide back at once into the old, easy, silly, rather vulgar and rather aimless world where there were big costly houses and legions of domestic servants, elaborate dinner parties and fancy dress balls, luxurious pleasure cars, fashionable race meetings, grouse moors, fox hunting, shopping for shopping's sake, silks and satins and diamonds. If we have these things restored to us, we cannot have the well-built cottages, the clean, healthy cities, the good schools, the happy mothers and babies, the rising level of national contentment and prosperity that we desire and demand. If the women workers in any trade are to be adequately paid, and if their health is to be adequately safeguarded by shorter hours of work, frequent holidays, &c., then the surplus profits of that trade will be slightly decreased, and the shareholder's income proportionately reduced—and you and I, dear reader, may be amongst those shareholders!

It is particularly necessary for women to bear these facts in mind, because even now a disgraceful amount of unnecessary expenditure takes place every year ostensibly to please and attract the feminine temperament. Of course this is very largely "camouflage" on the part of the astute trader, who creates an artificial demand for jewellery or furs or costly grimcracks, and then declares that his business exists merely to supply that demand. And very frequently it happens that the alleged "expensiveness" of women is simply a reflection of masculine "swank": the man who likes to show his neighbours what a fine, rich, generous fellow he is, and his wife and daughters must accept his generosity or appear ungracious. But just so far as we *are* responsible we must realise our responsibility; we must realise that extravagance and display will be quite as offensive, quite as violently "bad form" during the long toilsome years of reconstruction as during the years of war.

We are not likely to find a Chancellor of the Exchequer with sufficient originality to follow up the War Loan by a great Reconstruction Loan for the re-investment of our War Bonds and War Savings when their repayment becomes due—setting towns and villages competing against one another to provide, not tanks and machine-guns and similar engines of destruction, but play centres and hospitals and garden cities. This is too much to hope for; we shall probably have to pay up in the usual way, through the uninteresting medium of the rates and taxes. But when we are asked where the money for all our fine schemes is to come from the obvious answer is that it is coming out of our own individual pockets. "State aid—State provision—the duty of the State—the State must be responsible"—yes, certainly. But the State is not a magic purse from which well-meaning reformers may extract inexhaustible sums for the benefit of the community in general, without the slightest effect upon their own bank balance. "L'état, c'est moi."

Madge Mears.

Notes from Ireland.

Rumours of an election on November 30th are so definite and constant that organised women must make ready. The Women's Political League has a definite programme, which it is their duty to press on all political parties.

In pursuance of this policy, it was decided by the Standing Committee on Political Action that the League should approach in the first instance political organisations of every party, to explain to these bodies the special direction in which the League considers legislation at the present moment to be most necessary. The party organisations will then be asked to urge their candidates to include these points in electoral programmes and election addresses.

The points in the electoral programme of the League are selected with a view to actual present day needs in Ireland, and include a demand for immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Regulation 40 D; revision and codification of the Criminal Law and of the laws dealing with solicitation, on the basis of a single standard of morality, with the age of consent raised to eighteen; as also that of protection for boys; amendment of the Education Act, to render education free and compulsory, with readjustment of teachers' salaries independently of the average attendance; compulsory medical inspection of schools; provision of free dental clinics; abolition of the half-time system; provision of schools for mentally deficient children. The programme also includes extension of the maternity and child welfare schemes, State provision for necessitous widows with children and for deserted mothers, and a demand that all positions in the public or Civil Service be open to men and women on equal terms.

As Mr. Devlin happened to pay one of his rather rare visits to Belfast during the last week-end, the campaign was actually opened by a deputation to him. The proceedings were private, but the deputation was authorised to state that Mr. Devlin accepted the programme in its entirety, and would state this fact in his speeches.

For comment it is only necessary to quote the remark of one of the deputation, "Well, I begin to feel that we really have won the vote." In addition, it should be noted that however hard may be the demand made on the members of a really non-party organisation, the result is worth the sacrifice. Through all the hot years of political strife which preceded 1914 the woman suffrage movement in Ulster held steadily to its refusal to yield one jot to pressure from any party. Unionists and Nationalists met as members of suffrage committees and of suffrage societies when they met on no other political ground. When the Belfast Suffrage Society, after enfranchisement had been won, had to consider the question of change of name, there were not wanting timid souls who urged that the adoption of the present title would be fraught with danger. Nobody, they said, would ever believe that an organisation in Ulster calling itself "political" could be anything but party in its nature! However, the majority decided to take the risk, and the result has proved they were wise. The position of a political organisation, working for social reform through political action, is in fact very strong. There are over 69,000 women voters in Belfast, forming more than a third of the entire electorate. The League has striven to reach these women and to rouse them on the urgency of such matters as educational reform. It is the confident hope of the League that these new voters will act as a leaven in the political parties, and thus render possible that policy of agreed legislation, in which the best hope for constructive social reform seems to lie.

Dora Mellone.

Some Notes from the Elsie Inglis Unit in Makedonia.

There is no doubt that the name Scottish Women's Hospitals stands for good work; it is well known and respected. One felt this both on the way out and in Salonica. Salonica is the hub of the French and English work in the Balkans, and the Scottish Women's Hospitals are an element in the big crowd. Besides the military camps all round the town, there are those of the refugees from Serbia, and especially from Monastir (though these chiefly crowd the villages and towns, such as Vodena), and from the burnt-out part of Salonica itself; the last being chiefly Jews. The great fire of August, 1917, was still a subject of conversation in February, 1918, and one often heard it said that the British soldiers and sailors did wonderfully in it; many worked thirty hours at a stretch blowing up houses and forcibly dragging away the people from their homes and shops, where they would otherwise have perished. The authorities were unprepared; there were looters in plenty; it was our men who saved life: they would carry out whole families, grandmothers and infants and all, and put them in any motor they could stop in the road, a general's or anybody's; to be taken to safety. It seems generally agreed that Tommy's disinterested zeal in this emergency has done more than anything else to build up a local *entente cordiale* with the British.

We had to stay some weeks in Salonica, and soon found out the difficulties in shopping there, the scanty supplies and exorbitant prices. In spite of this and of the bad roads and dirt and widespread ruins from the fire, there is still much of interest. The Christian Churches, with scarcely an exception, had been made into mosques by the Turks, minarets being added; since the Greeks came into possession of the town they have been restored to Christian worshippers, and the defacing whitewash and plaster removed from the interiors. The Church of the Twelve Apostles in particular had all the walls covered with frescoes of saints and sacred subjects, now exposed again, but spotted all over with holes; probably this was done to make the plaster adhere. An old Roman road called the Via Ignatia runs through the town and across the country to Durazzo, and there is a Roman arch covered with bas-reliefs across it. Near the arch is the round Church of St. George, originally a Roman temple; the French are excavating near it, finding ancient remains. There is a grand view of Mount Olympus across the bay, most beautiful in the glory of the sunset. The road to our camp ran through the country of Alexander the Great; there are a number of tumuli by the sides of the road, and some at least are said to contain the ruined tombs of the Ptolemys.

Our camp was in Makedonia, to the south of the Balkans, where Serbs faced Bulgars along the crests of the mountains. The Makedonians are a mixed race; the language seemed to be chiefly Serbian. They have much of the East in their customs; it is gentlemen first, and ladies a long way behind; *he* rides the donkey and *she* plods after. Children are often given lifts, but the bride's return from the wedding is her last donkey ride. If they cross a river together she carries him; I have seen a photograph of this proceeding. A British subaltern whom I met at a mess told me he could not stand seeing the man riding and the wife walking, and made short work of reversing their positions, giving the man a beating into the bargain; one wonders how much the woman enjoyed it.

There is always a stream from the mountains running through the villages, and big plane trees usually stand in the central open space. Plane, oaks, and elms are the chief trees. In a country town near our camp the Saturday market was a busy scene, bright with the colours of the native dresses and the blankets on the donkeys and ponies.

Our Unit consisted of three doctors and an administrator, five sisters, ten nursing orderlies and six others, these for the hospital: and the transport section under three officers brought the total number to fifty-seven. We calculated that we needed about forty bolnichars (Serbian hospital orderlies), but the Serbian officer who was in charge of them brought the number up to eighty, so many were required as messengers, and to fetch wood and to attend to the Serbian *personnel*, and as reliefs in cases of sickness. After we had had the hospital open for some time, the Chef de Santé asked us to double the number of beds—*i.e.*, fill two hundred instead of one hundred. This we were very willing to do, but there were many difficulties of transport to overcome before we could get the extra equipment. At times there was much pressure on the Serbian clearing hospitals, and then they would send us patients even though we had already reported no empty beds. Then we sent off the recovering cases to the neighbouring convalescent hospital, and brought into use all the spare stretchers. As soon as our mud and wattle hut containing the operating, sterilising and dressing rooms was ready and the tents previously in use evacuated, one was at once occupied with surplus patients. There were usually some of the staff sick, and sometimes they required a good deal of attention. All these additions to the normal ward work put a great strain on the nursing staff, especially when many of them and nearly all the bolnichars went down with influenza. Some of the transport section, who had had V.A.D. training, most kindly came to the rescue, and carried on as nursing orderlies. At one time it was necessary to appeal to our neighbours for assistance, and the American Unit, Scottish Women's Hospitals, and the Serbian Relief Fund Hospital each kindly lent a sister for a time. We were called a surgical field hospital, but our beds were largely filled with sick; still we had a good many surgical cases, chiefly bomb and shrapnel wounds of various degrees: some were very serious.

Since the above was written events have moved rapidly, and the hospital has moved with them It has changed its quarters, and is now no doubt in Serbia and in healthier country, away from the low-lying, swampy, and malarious regions of Makedonia. But the present writer must leave this part of the story, as she left the Unit before the push began.

A Former Officer.

Reviews.

The First Interim Report of the Women's Housing Sub-Committee. Advisory Council, Ministry of Reconstruction. (H.M. Stationery Office. 1d.)

Both the Ministry of Reconstruction and the Women's Sub-Committee are to be congratulated on the valuable Report on Housing, recently issued; it will receive a grateful welcome from all who recognise the vital and all-embracing importance of housing reform. Anybody intimately acquainted with life in working-class homes will at once realise, with a sense of great relief and gratitude, that those responsible for this report possess not only the necessary sympathy and goodwill, but have also acquired the essential knowledge of the life of the working housewife and mother, whose needs and aspirations they voice so accurately and so clearly.

The Committee consists of Lady Emmott (Chairman), Mrs. E. Barton, Mrs. Victor Branford, Miss A. Churton, Dr. Janet Lane Claypon, Mrs. Sanderson Furniss, Mrs. G. S. Guy, Miss M. D. Jones, Mrs. R. Moore, and Mrs. C. S. Peel, O.B.E., with Miss A. K. Leach and Miss E. M. Waley as Secretaries. Their terms of reference are:—

(*a*) "To visit specimen houses which have been erected by the Ministry of Munitions or other houses selected after consultation with Branch F in order to make suggestions with special reference to the convenience of the housewife."

(*b*) "To advise on the plans received from the Architects' Committee with special reference to the convenience of the housewife."

The Report is divided into three parts, Part I. only being published. The publication of Parts II. and III. is not at present proposed, as it would involve the printing of many plans, which would be costly. One hopes, however, that this decision will at some more propitious time be reversed, as there is no doubt that these Parts would be of immense value to the many committees and individuals now preparing to deal with the subject in view of peace-time needs and opportunities.

Part I. deals with "Urban Housing," and the recommendations cover many important details as to the size of the superficial area and frontage of the house, the aspect, number, and size of the rooms, the size and position of the windows and other fittings, type of entrance and staircase, the necessary outhouses, the garden and other open spaces. The Committee lay uncompromising stress on the necessity for a separate bathroom and private lavatory accommodation—both of which decencies of life are generally non-existent in the homes of the workers to-day. It is immensely cheering to find recommendations in regard to such small but important details as a handrail to the staircase (it may hardly be believed, but it is a fact that this is very seldom provided), the avoidance of dust-traps (with which, as every housewife knows, all houses abound with an almost diabolical liberality!), the provision of a stone slab in the larder, and of a plate-rack to the scullery. There are some general remarks on hot water supply, and heating and cooking arrangements; but on these the Committee are postponing their detailed recommendations pending further study and investigation of the possibilities provided by modern scientific and engineering experiments.

More About Housekeeping.

Thrift for the Housewife. By Mrs. John J. Webster. (Chapman & Hall. 5s. net.)

The Ideal Servant-Saving House. By an Engineer and his Wife. (Chambers. 1s. 6d. net.)

Both these books contain useful information, and the second of them contains hardly anything else—a fact entirely in its favour. It is, moreover, quite free from that tone of exhortation (not to say reprimand) towards women in general, from which so many writers upon domestic topics appear unable to refrain. No tone could be more likely to alienate intelligent women; and Mrs. Webster, by allowing it to pervade her introduction, will probably lose readers to whom her later pages might be both interesting and useful. Should her book reach a second edition she would be well advised to omit the Introduction, and begin at once with the sensible and helpful *Notes on Simple Cookery*. The directions for a "pot-roast" (and it may be remembered that this may be completed in a fireless cooker), the note about lifting vegetables out of water instead of pouring the water from them, whereby "there is every chance of the grit that has been washed out of them being returned again," and some other hints are just the sort of "tips" which every domestic worker needs at some stage of her career, and generally does not find in books.

Many of the recipes that come next have already been put a little out of date by fuel restrictions, although in some instances the use of the fireless cooker to supplement the oven or steamer might render them possible.

The section headed *Care of Health* contains, amid much good sense, two very rash suggestions. The first of these is that some elderly men and women "could easily go without breakfast and not hurt themselves—indeed, they would be the better for the rest from food"; the second is that the regular taking of calomel is good for "many people . . . elderly and middle-aged especially." It is to be hoped that no elderly persons will prolong their nightly "rest from food" by five hours or so without first consulting an experienced doctor—still more, that they will not administer to themselves calomel (a drug really dangerous to some people) without taking the same precaution.

The counsels of Mrs. Webster's final section, *Helps to Bodily Comfort*, will certainly be found useful. Many persons, for instance, to whom the use of a nasal douche has hitherto been painful, will thank her for teaching them to say "'Honk' and keep the mouth and the throat in the same position" after articulating it. But in the matter of chilblains, any sufferer inclined to forego the boracic powder and hot water treatment on account of having no boracic powder may be safely assured that the true inwardness of the remedy lies in the quarter of an hour's immersion in heat.

The Engineer and his Wife begin by advising that houses should be better "insulated" in order to keep them both warmer and cooler. As a coat or cloak may be rendered warmer by an interlining, which creates one layer of air between itself and the outer material and another layer between itself and the inner lining, so between the outer and inner walls of a house, or between a ceiling and a floor, is placed a lining of some substance offering "a very high resistance to the passage of heat." The substance at present most favoured is some sort of ground and compressed cork formed into slabs that can be used much like wooden boards. Houses well insulated need less internal heating than those which have no such lining, and are presumably less noisy.

When we come to the array of domestic apparatus recommended—the crockery-washing and clothes-washing machines, the peelers, slicers, and mixers, the carpet sweepers, vacuum cleaners, boot and knife polishers, and electric cookers—the reflection naturally presents itself that it is really a great waste to instal all this machinery for the use of a single house, and that any woman who had advanced thus far on the path of development would turn almost instinctively towards the idea of using them in common with her neighbours.

Finally, the main impression derived from attentive study of both books is that the things immediately to be worked for are more intelligent house-planning and a drastic cheapening of electricity.

The Burning Glass. By Marjorie Bowen. (Collins, 6s. net.)

The scene of Miss Bowen's latest novel, which is written with her usual descriptive skill and historical accuracy, is laid some years before the French Revolution when

> "Marat was young and Guillotin dissecting
> Corday unborn and Lamballe in Savoie,"

and describes the last and most eventful years in the life of Mdlle. Julie de Lespinasse, the famous literary Frenchwoman, and her relations with the Marquis de Mora and the Comte de Guibert to whom the greater part of her celebrated "Lettres" were addressed.

This brilliantly gifted woman was the natural daughter of the Comtesse D'Albon. She became in 1754 the companion of Mme. du Deffand, and remained for ten years with that lady until the latter's jealousy of Julie's talents caused a violent quarrel between them which ended the friendship, and the younger woman set up her own *salon* in Paris (sharing her rooms with M. D'Alambert) where a great many celebrated men and women met. She became betrothed to de Mora in 1765, and in 1773 she met Jacques de Guibert, colonel in the Corsican Army, and author of the "Essai Géneral de Tactique." The friendship then created between them increased to a terrible and consuming passion on her part and a reluctant return of it on his (the more incongruous, as she was then middle-aged, and he scarcely thirty), and was the theme for those wonderful letters of hers in which she poured out the whole of her tormented soul to her worthless lover. The death of de Mora in 1774 by consumption hastened that of Julie de Lespinasse who, torn between remorse for her faithlessness to de Mora and her mad and hopeless love for de Guibert had resorted to drug-taking and thus increased her evident tendency to consumption of which she died in 1776, soon after the marriage of de Guibert.

The story, which is tragic in the extreme, contrives to throw into strong relief the distinct difference in temperament of the principal figures. Julie de Lespinasse with her delicate perceptions, sensitiveness, and highly-strung nerves; de Guibert, healthy, obtuse, and commonplace; the dreadful fascination de Guibert exercised over Julie, and the comparison drawn between spiritual and animal love—a love that could not but end in tragedy.

Miss Bowen's fondness for horrible death-bed scenes and ravaging illness is indulged to the full; also the usual number of paragraphs is reserved for minute details of boudoirs, salons, and the dresses of the characters. We meet again the familiar lace handkerchief pressed to the lips, the chicken-skin fan and other trifles. Notwithstanding, this book (like Miss Bowen's other books) is well worth reading, for those who enjoy historical romance.

WOMEN WORKERS & THE FUTURE.—1.

A New Booklet for Women Workers.

Every wage-earning woman knows that she cannot go on working for ever and that she must sooner or later face the problem of providing for her later years when she will wish to retire from active life or be forced to do so because she is no longer able to continue working.

An interesting booklet on this subject, entitled "The Future of Women Workers" has just been issued by the Scottish Widows Fund.

Written especially for women, it clearly shows the value of Mutual Life Assurance to women workers and explains how, by small annual payments out of present earnings, a woman may make provision for her own future, and, if necessary, for that of her dependents.

Secure a copy NOW and give it careful perusal! Sent free on request.

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A Useful Pamphlet.

We have received from the Women's Local Government Society (19, Tothill Street, S.W. 1) two excellent leaflets on "Rural District Councils" and "The Need for Women Councillors." One is a handbill for free distribution to Local Government electors. It summarises in a very few words the functions of the Council, the qualifications for serving on it and voting for it, and urges the election of good men and good women as Councillors. The price is 1s. 3d. per hundred. The second leaflet goes into the subject of "Rural District Councils and the Need for Women on Them" in more detail. Its price is 6d. per dozen, 3s. per hundred.

Obituary.

MISS LYDIA M. WEBB.

Amongst those who lost their lives in the torpedoing of the "Leinster" on October 10th was Miss Lydia M. Webb, of Spout Farm, Rotherfield, Sussex. Miss Webb was an Irishwoman, a member of a well-known Quaker family in Dublin, and sister of Dr. Helen Webb. Her career has been one of active helpfulness: she was for some years a Poor Law Guardian for Marylebone, and interested herself especially in the management of the Poor Law schools, for which she initiated many useful improvements. The "Brabazon" work for brightening the lot of the aged inmates of the workhouse also claimed her help, and for a great number of years she has worked enthusiastically for the "Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants." Miss Webb was an ardent supporter of the Women's Suffrage movement, and was beloved and respected by all those who had the good fortune to be her co-workers. Few persons could be so ill-spared at a time like this, or leave a larger circle of personal friends who will always associate her memory:

"With that best portion of a good man's life
His little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love."

Correspondence.

THE FUTURE OF THE N.U.W.S.S.

Madam,—The Societies of the N.U.W.S.S. are being urged by the Executive to raise money for the support of Headquarters. This raises the question of the relation existing between Headquarters and the Societies. When the Societies were all bent towards one purpose this relation was a very close one, and essential for the instruction, guidance, and co-ordination of the Societies in their united aim. Now, however, that the Executive has become transformed by a sort of natural declension into a kind of Commission of Enquiry on Social Questions, the bond between it and the Societies is of the feeblest. Headquarters really only needs the Societies for two purposes, viz: to raise the wind, and to serve as a pretext for saying, when it passes resolutions, that it has the numbers of its Societies behind it. And as a fact it has not these numbers behind it.

Nor, on the other hand, can the Societies be said to "need" Headquarters in any sense in which the latter can respond to the need. They do need a unified purpose, but this the Executive does not supply them with. All it can do is to offer them a list as long as our arm of social reforms, not one of which, I am safe in saying, would be agreeable to the opinion of all the Societies, and many of which would be adopted by very few; for in spite of the phrase, "all such reforms, economic, social, and legislative," brought forth, like a still-born child, with such infinite labour by the Council of February last, many of the social questions which come under that designation are in reality far too controversial, and the implications involved in them far too obscure, to be taken up by the Societies of the N.U.W.S.S.

Is it too late for the Union, at the ensuing meetings in Birmingham, to face the fact that unless some drastic change is made in its constitution it will die of inanition? It is, I imagine, too late now to become what in my opinion we should have converted ourselves into in February last, viz.: a National Women Citizen's Association. But cannot we cut our losses, and find a way to constitute ourselves into a body with a similar aim, viz.: the education of the Woman Citizen. There are millions of us, mostly unenlightened, and there is no danger of having too many workers in that field.

Emma Common (Mrs. Walford Common).

RURAL HOUSING.

Madam,—I was glad to see Lady Selborne's letter in last week's Common Cause, and I am perfectly ready to admit that the practice of spending public money lavishly is very undesirable. However, we are in a dilemma, as we are told that bad housing lies at the root of nearly all social problems. I think that it is quite as justifiable to spend public money on new houses as to spend it upon "public gardens, a good water supply, cheap travelling facilities." It is not merely "a certain number of people" who would benefit by increased housing accommodation, but the community at large, who would be relieved from overcrowding.

Lady Selborne is perfectly right in pointing out that I have rather under-estimated the case in suggesting 8s. 6d. or 9s. weekly as an economic rent. I was not, however, including rates in this estimate, as in this part of the world (Yorkshire) houses are usually let and rents paid half-yearly, and the tenant pays the rates. I do not think that anyone would build country cottages merely for the sake of investment, when five per cent. can be obtained in War Loan without any risk or trouble. The private cottage builder will build either because he wishes to benefit the community, or because he requires cottages in which his own or his tenant's workpeople may live.

The cost of repairs to new and well-built houses should not be heavy, and the landlord is partly compensated for this, when paying income tax, by the reduction of one-sixth on incomes derived from house property.

Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that the rent of the new houses was to be 12s. weekly or more, as Lady Selborne suggests, what would be the result? It would simply mean that they would be occupied by the people who are better off, and that the agricultural labourers would be left to occupy the old bad houses at 2s. or 3s. a week. Is this the kind of thing we want for our discharged soldiers? If house building is to be subsidised, why not reserve these houses for parents of families with wages under a certain sum? If their wages should increase during actual occupation the rents could be raised accordingly. The danger of corruption is always present with State-aided schemes, but I think that it should be possible to devise proper safeguards against this.

The alternative to subsidise rural housing schemes, is still further to raise agricultural wages, but as this would again increase the cost of food, including that of the agricultural labourer, we should go a step further in the vicious circle and nobody would benefit by it. Farm workers' wages must always be less than those of town workers, who can work in all weathers. The farmer pays his workers wet or fine, and there are many days when the pay is not earned.

If any of your readers will study the Minority Report on the employment of soldiers on the land, which is published in book form entitled, "British Agriculture, the Nation's Opportunity" (Murray), they will find an able addendum on rural housing.

In the words of the report "To burden the already difficult problems of rural housing, with the additional difficulty of full war prices, would be simply to make them insoluble."

M. Lawson Tancred.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD MEMORANDUM ON PARLIAMENT AND LOCAL ELECTIONS ACT, 1918.

Madam,—The Election Consultative Committee of the Women's Local Government Society desire to call attention to the fact that, although statutory elections for Town and Metropolitan Borough Councillors are postponed for a year, any casual vacancy occurring after the Register comes into force is to be filled by ordinary election, and not by the choice of the Council as has been the method since the passing of the Elections and Registration Act, 1915.

The first woman member of the Brighton Borough Council, Mrs. Blatch, has been returned unopposed under this new rule, and is the first woman member to be directly elected since elections were suspended on account of the War.

The Committee would urge all women's organisations interested in the return of women to Local Authorities to be prepared with suitable women candidates. They will be glad to advise in special cases, and to give information of a technical character. Inquiries should be addressed to the Society's Office, 10, Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W. 1.

Mary Williams, Chairman.
Mary Stewart Kilgour, Hon. Deputy Secretary.
Annie Leigh Browne, Hon. Secretary.
Marian Berry, Secretary.

WOMEN POLICE.

Madam,— Will you kindly allow me to ventilate our needs through the medium of your Correspondence column?

We require seventy well educated gentlewomen for immediate work in the munition areas, and can assure those who come into training that an unique opportunity is opened to women who intend later on to take up political and social reconstruction. They will get a first-hand knowledge of actual conditions and of the needs of women. Coming into close contact with workers as workers they will gain a practical insight that will add value to the theoretical training of Universities and Colleges, and give a firmer basis for future work, either in the political or social arenas, or in the fields of history, psychology, and law.

All correspondence in answer to this appeal to be addressed to:—The Recruiting Officer, Women Police Service, 6, Eccleston Square, S.W. 1.

E. F. Harburn,
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Reports, Notices, etc.

LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE OF WOMEN.

On October 15th, at the morning session of the Conference, during the discussion on the Ministry of Health, the following necessities were emphasised :—

(*a*) For midwives being under direct national control, as at present when midwives as a class advocated any reform, they were always accused of self-interest.

(*b*) For the inspection of domestic servants' rooms.

(*c*) For better lavatory accommodation in factories and workshops. A delegate from the General Workers' Union stated that in one factory where 400 women were employed, only six lavatories were provided.

An emergency resolution was moved by the Bolton Labour Party on the separation allowance of soldiers' wives. It was pointed out that whereas trade unions had obtained increases in pay for their members to meet with the increased cost of living, separation allowances had not been raised.

In a discussion on housing which followed, the unanimous opinion was expressed that all houses should contain three bedrooms, a bathroom, and possess a garden.

The second day opened with the discussion of the following resolution :—

"That this Conference recognises that the political power of the Women's Vote is dependent upon the extent of organisation amongst them, and urges them in considering the methods of organisation to be adopted, to throw their strength into the development of a strong political organisation embracing both men and women and not to follow the lines of sex division."

The resolution was proposed by Dr. Marion Phillips and seconded by Miss Ellen Wilkinson. Dr. Marion Phillips based her support of the resolutions upon her conviction that there is no woman's opinion in the sense of an opinion held by women and affecting women as distinct from men, but that women's interests are so closely bound up with men's interests that they should combine in organisation for both sexes to work for their joint welfare. Miss Ellen Wilkinson seconded the resolution and supported Dr. Marion Phillips' statements, but put in a special plea for the younger generation of women. These women are being urged to join organisations started not merely by men but by an older generation of men. They must be allowed a share in the direction of their affairs. "Young Women" she said "do not want to be dominated by elderly gentlemen with modern programmes."

The following amendment was proposed by Miss Underwood for the Women's Freedom League and seconded by Mrs. Cooper for the N.U.W.S.S. :—

In line two, to substitute for all words after "amongst them," the words : "and is of opinion that it is advisable for women to work in political organisations with men, but that, until women have secured political, social and economic equality with men with regard to their liberties, status and opportunities, separate women's organisations are also necessary to develop the political experience of women and to influence public opinion, and bring pressure to bear on political organisations to support the establishment of such equality.

Miss Underwood advocated the policy of establishing special women's organisations as a measure of present expediency. In spite of political enfranchisement women still labour under many disabilities and must combine among themselves for purposes of self-education and to secure equality of opportunity with men. Mrs. Cooper spoke from many years' practical experience of women's position inside men's unions. Women members were not, she said, on an equal footing with men members, and were always handicapped. They must organise independently.

A vote being taken, the amendment was lost and the resolution carried.

The Labour Research Department (formerly known as the Fabian Research Department) held a very successful Conference on Thursday, October 17th, on the "Principles which should determine the Fixing of Women's Wages." Dr. Marion Phillips, who was in the chair, indicated the main points which must be taken into account when discussing this question. Miss Ellen C. Wilkinson (Co-operative Employees Union), who was the principal speaker, stated that many factors which employers used as an excuse for differentiating between the wages of men and women were due to the exceptional circumstances of the war, which had increased the cost of producing and handling goods, and not to women's inferiority. Mr. G. D. H. Cole (Labour Research Department) analysed the difficulties of the problem, and stated that the only solution was a complete revolution in the social system. Among those who took part in the discussion were W. T. Kelly (Workers' Union), Mr. George Ryder (Member of the Special Arbitration Tribunal on Women's Wages), Mrs. Cooper (Textiles), and Mr. W. L. Hichens (Cammell Lairds, Ltd.).

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

The National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

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Hon. Secretaries:
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MRS. OLIVER STRACHEY (Parliamentary).

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Offices—Evelyn House, 62, Oxford Street, London, W. 1.
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Headquarter Notes.

The N.U.W.S.S. gave evidence before the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry on 14th inst. Its delegates were Mrs. Corbett Ashby, Mrs. Hubback, Miss MacMillan and Miss Rosamond Smith. The Union

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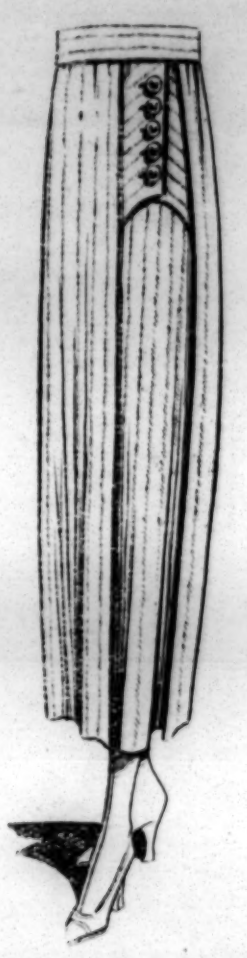

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aimed chiefly at showing what effect the various disabilities, legal, customary, and social, imposed upon women, had on the relative rates of men and women's wages. They pointed out how the combined effect of these disabilities was to limit to a very great extent the more skilled and highly paid occupations which a woman might enter—thus to overcrowd the lower ranks of industry.

Among *legal disabilities* which affect the employment of women were instanced :—

1. The closing to women of several professions, such as the more important posts in the Civil Service, the legal profession, the Church, the Stock Exchange, &c.
2. The regulations insisting on compulsory retirement on marriage on the part of women in occupations such as the Civil Service, among teachers under many local Education Authorities.
3. The Protective Legislation, which in cases where it relates only to women, makes women less convenient employees.

The *chief educational disabilities* affecting women are :—

1. The less importance attached by most parents to their daughter's education as compared with their son's.
2. The difficulty girls have in obtaining technical training through not being admitted to many trades as apprentices.
3. The far smaller proportion of University Scholarships open to women.

The chief among the *customary* disabilities under which women suffer are: Their exclusion from so many men's trades, especially the skilled trades, by the trade unions. Moreover, even when women are working in the trade, they are often prevented from entering men's trade unions, or where admitted they have no voice in the management of the affairs of the union. It was pointed out that women are still very backward as regards their own organisation in trade unions, partly owing to their having been so long used to work as isolated units at home and partly owing to the lowness of their wages, and to the fear of victimisation.

The *social* disabilities of women to which the N.U. drew attention are as follows :—

(*a*) The belief, very widely held, fostered by laws relating to franchise, inheritance, guardianship, marriage, nationality, &c., that a woman is worth less than a man.

(*b*) The fact that work done in their own homes by women is without payment, which induces the habit of mind that a woman's work has no money value.

(*c*) The expectation on the part of so many women of being kept by husband or father, which accounts for the willingness to accept "pocket-money" and "patriotic" wages, thus to reduce the standard.

(*d*) The fact that it is possible to subsidise wages by the gains from prostitution.

(*e*) The fact that double-work is frequently undertaken by women wage-earners who are expected to see to their domestic affairs, and to attend to family claims, while no such duties are expected from men.

The delegates of the N.U.W.S.S. further referred to the alleged *disabilities on account of health* on the part of women, and pointed out how few of these have as yet been proved, and how many pre-conceived ideas have vanished during the war in the light of experience. Much of the ill-health at present in existence among women can be accounted for by underfeeding following on low wages and overwork.

The delegates next referred to "Marriage Mortality," and showed how the fact that women expect themselves and are expected to marry, makes women less valuable workers in many occupations by making them less ambitious and enterprising.

They further pointed out the importance of the fact, that the majority of men either support or expect to support families at some period of their lives. This has necessarily established a tradition that in any grade of labour, the minimum wage earned by a man must be enough for this purpose. It is felt, erroneously in many cases, that no such obligation rests upon women.

The delegtaes were then asked what suggestions they could make by which the various disabilities suffered by women could be removed. The following suggestions were therefore made :—

1. *Legal disabilities.*
   (*a*) The removal of all legal disabilities of women's right to enter or to remain in any occupation they may choose.
   (*b*) The revision of the Factory Acts and other measures of protective legislation for all workers, both men and women.
   (*c*) Differential protective regulations should only be set up if, and when, there is proved to be a genuine physiological reason why women need more protection than men.
2. *Customary disabilities.*
   (*a*) Agreements with trade unions in those trades that were considered men's trades before the war, by which the trades should be open to women, equal pay for work of equal value and approximate pay for work of approximate value being guaranteed.
   (*b*) Trade unions in trades consisting of men and women shall be urged to admit women and to give them the full powers of membership.
   (*c*) In trades in which no men are working, or in which the men's unions will not admit women, great efforts should be made to extend and improve women's trade union organisation.
3. *Educational disabilities.*
   The removal of all educational disabilities of women and the provision of equal facilities for technical training, apprenticeship, and University education.
4. *Social disabilities.*
   These can only be done away with gradually. The first step must, however, be the removal of the remaining legal disabilities of women with respect to franchise, inheritance, guardianship, marriage, nationality, taxation, the criminal law, &c. The effects of this removal will be a rise of status owing to the change in public opinion.
5. *Health.*
   Better wages which would allow better feeding, less overwork, and healthier conditions of life would, we believe, greatly diminish any discrepancy as regards health between the two sexes. The improve-

ments in housing, and in health and sanitary legislation would, of course, raise the general level for health in the community.

6. "*Marriage Mortality.*"

The removal of the embargo on the employment of married women. Better housing and such measures as day nurseries, national kitchens, &c., which will reduce the labour on domestic work will make the continued employment of married women possible.

7. *The payment of a family wage to men.*

So long as there is confusion in the public mind as to whether pay is to be according to needs or to services rendered, the fact that men are supposed to receive a family wage will present a difficulty in adjusting wages between men and women. At present, however, large numbers of unmarried men without dependents receive an advantage, while large numbers of women with dependents are at a disadvantage. As these women number nearly 50 per cent. of all women wage-earners it is important to take them into account. Any extension of the system of separation allowances such as that in force in the Army and in the police force, should apply to women as well as to men. Should payment be made according to services rendered this difficulty will no longer have to be considered.

In summing up, the delegates stated that the N.U.W.S.S. is of opinion that it is essential in the interests of women that the free entry to trades and fullest opportunity for training should be open to them. Without this the payment of an equal wage will be a danger to their continued employment in the better paid trades which the war has opened to them. If both equal pay, and equal opportunity were secured, these discrepancies between men and women workers which are due to these removable causes would disappear, and occupations unsuited by nature to women would be reserved for men without the assistance of artificial restrictions.

Literature Department.

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Forthcoming Meetings (N.U.W.S.S).

OCTOBER 26.

Birmingham—Meeting for Members—Council Agenda—Moral Legislation—Speaker: Miss Allison Neilans. Business Meeting 4.30 p.m. Miss Neilans 5.30 p.m.

OCTOBER 28.

Leamington—Central Counties Federation—Annual Meeting—Lady Nott Bower—Women on Town Councils—Chair: Mrs. Arbuthnot—Business Meeting 3.15 p.m.—Lady Nott Bower 3.45 p.m.

E. Islington—St. Thomas' Church, Finsbury Park—Mothers' Union—Speaker: Mrs. Bertram—Subject: "The Duties of Citizenship and Women's Service Guild" 3 p.m.

Sheffield—Nether Schoolroom—Jumble Sale 2-5 p.m.

Cambridge—Women's Suffrage Association—St. Andrew's Hall—Members' Meeting to consider Agenda of the half-yearly Council

OCTOBER 28-29.

Bristol—Jumble Sale in aid of funds at 72, White Ladies Road From 10.30-4.30

OCTOBER 29.

Barnsley—Arcade Hall—Mrs. Fisher will speak on "The New Responsibilities of Women"—Chair: Evan Davies, Esq., B.A. 7.30 p.m.

Avery Hill—Miss Curwen will lecture at the Avery Hill Training College, whose past and present students support two "beds" in the Elsie Inglis Unit 3.30 p.m.

Birmingham—Elmdon Lodge—Mrs. Ring 2.30

OCTOBER 30.

London Society—Monthly Council—58, Victoria Street (Delegate Meeting)—Members are invited to attend as visitors 5.0 p.m.

Bingley—Victoria Hall—Speaker: Mr. H. A. L. Fisher on "The Responsibilities of Citizenship"—Chairman: Rev. R. Garrad 7.30 p.m.

OCTOBER 31.

Dewsbury—Mayor's Parlour—Public Meeting—Speakers: Mrs. H. A. L. Fisher and Mrs. Herbert North—Chair: Mrs. Edwin Lee—Collection for Headquarter's Fund 7.30 p.m.

Coming Events.

OCTOBER 25.

Falkirk—St. Andrew's Church—In aid of S.W.H. and Serbian Relief Fund—Chairman: Fred Johnston, Esq., J.P. (Editor of *Falkirk Herald*)—Speakers: M. Popovitch, M. Myotovitch, Sister Walker.

OCTOBER 26.

Royal Albert Hall—Demonstration—Equal Pay for Equal Work—Chair: Miss A. S. Byett, LL.A. (President, N.F.W.T.)—Speakers: Miss Nina Boyle, Miss Hilda Croxson, Right Hon. Sir Willoughby Dickinson, M.P., Mr. Harry Gosling, &c.—Tickets free to all parts of the Hall—Apply to Ticket Secretary, N.F.W.T., Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, E.C. 4 7.0 p.m.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS.

THE WOMEN'S FREEDOM LEAGUE, London Branches Council Discussion Meeting, Saturday, October 26th, at 3 p.m., in the Minerva Café, 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1. Subject: "A League of Nations," to be opened by Miss Lind af Hageby; Chair: Mrs. Tanner. Admission free. Reserved seats 1s. from Secretary, W. F. L., 144, High Holborn, W.C. 1.

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